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ABSTRACT

At the end of 1986 a survey of 1,200 new and 1,200 continuing undergraduate students of the Open University (Great Britain) was undertaken which addressed the related issues of costs of studying and access to television and video equipment for study purposes. The overall response rate was 75.4% when the data were analyzed in March 1987. Analyses of the data indicated that 77% of the undergraduate students had access to some kind to video equipment for study purposes, with approximately 60% reporting access in their homes. In addition, 26% of the students without home access to video indicated a willingness to buy or rent a videocassette machine if the Open University provided video material for course work. The data also provided some potentially important variations in patterns of access based on demographics and region. The text is supplemented by 12 figures and data for the study are displayed in four appended tables. (4 references) (EW)

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Report No. 5

ACCESS TO VIDEO EQUIPMENT FOR STUDY PURPOSES - UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN 1986

Findings from the Costs / Access Survey 1986.

Adrian Kirkwood

May 1987

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Carrying out the survey of students' costs/access to equipment and analysing the results is the work of a number of members of IET.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the end of 1986 a survey of new and continuing undergraduate students was undertaken on the related issues of 'costs of studying and access to equipment for study purposes'. Questionnaires were sent to a sample of 2,400 students (1,200 students taking their first O.U. course and 1,200 continuing students). The overall response rate was 75.4% when the data was analysed in March 1987.

This report presents an analysis of students responses to the four questions concerned with students' access to T.V. and video facilities for study purposes. Relevant extracts from the questionnaire are reproduced in the Appendix to this report.

The main report is preceded by a brief summary of findings, with the survey data appearing in tabular form in the Appendix.

2.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overall figures for O.U. undergraduate students' access to T.V. and video equipment are-

	% with access	
	1986	(1984)
Video-cassette recorder (somewhere)	77.0	(61.0)
Video-cassette recorder (at home)	59.8	(45.2)
T.V. set at home with Oracle/Ceefax	22.5	(15.8)
T.V. set at home with Prestel	0.5	(0.4)

Seventy-seven percent of undergraduate students had access of some kind to video equipment for study purposes - 60% had access in their home.

Eighty-four percent of machines are of VHS format.

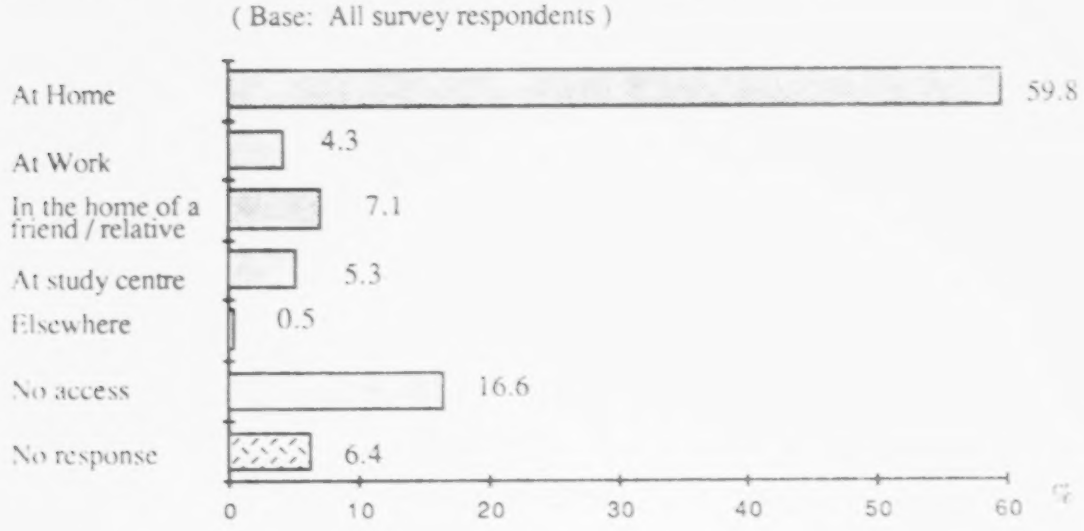
Twenty-six percent of students without home access to video indicated that they might be willing to rent or buy a video-cassette machine if the O.U. provided video material for course work.

Some potentially important variations in patterns of access are revealed when the survey data is analysed in relation to demographic and other data.

3.0 ACCESS TO VIDEO EQUIPMENT

Students were asked if they had convenient access for O.U. study purposes to a video cassette machine and, if so, to indicate the location which was most convenient. Figure 1 shows the overall responses.

Figure 1. Convenient access to a video-cassette machine?



When compared with the relevant data from the 1984 Audio Visual Media Survey (Grundin, 1985) - the most recent general survey of students' access to equipment for study purposes - an increase of 16% in access of any kind can be seen, with a 14.6% increase in home access.

In the country as a whole, there is a growth in home access to video equipment, as revealed in surveys of the general population:

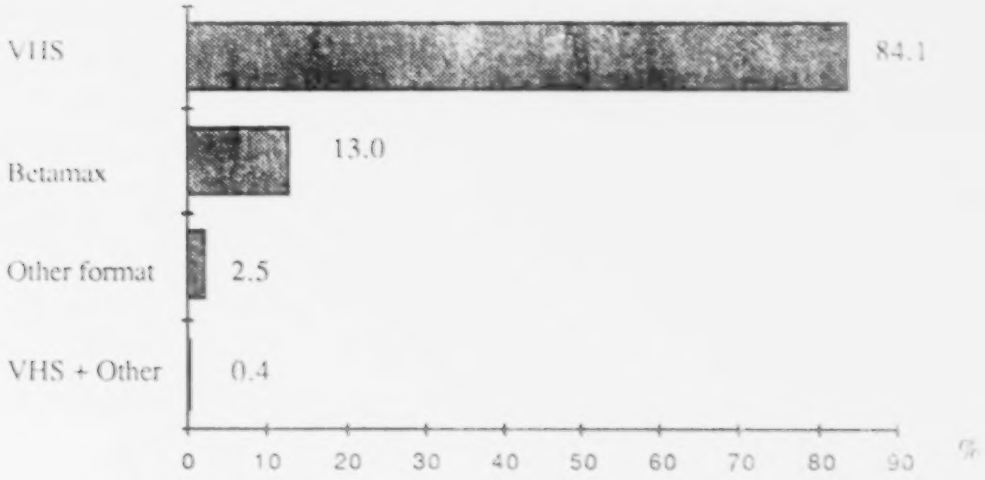
		% of households with a VCR	
1984	I.B.A.	35*	(* of those with a TV set)
1985	A.G.B.	28	
	General Household Survey	31	
1986	B.B.C.	41-48	

Although this survey provides an indication of the proportion of students able to arrange access to video equipment in locations other than their own home, the data can tell us nothing about the **quality** of that access. Qualitative information derived from interviews (e.g. Durbridge, 1984) suggests that when students gain access to video equipment at their place of work, in the home of a friend or relative or elsewhere, they are likely to experience inconvenience which can reduce the potential value of the video material.

Figure 2 shows the format of the video-cassette machine that students in the 1986 survey had access to.

Figure 2. Format of video-cassette machines to which students have access.

(Base: All respondents with access of any kind to video)



The overall responses for video access were analysed further in relation to demographic and other data collected by the survey. This reveals some interesting variations in patterns of access that are discussed below.

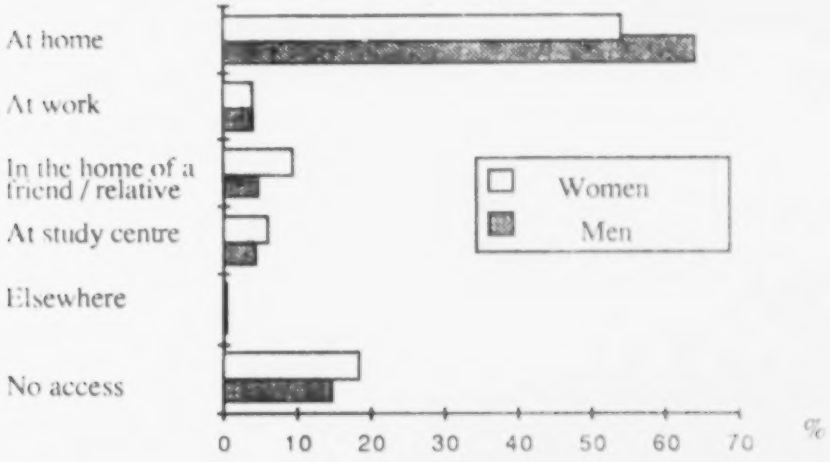
i) Access by sex

Considerably more male students than female students have home access to video. Female students are more likely to gain access in the home of a friend or relative or at their O.U. study centre. Access to video equipment at work is virtually the same for both male and female students.

Figure 3 illustrates these patterns of access by sex. Greater detail is given in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Figure 3. Convenient access to a video-cassette machine - by sex.

(Base: All survey respondents)



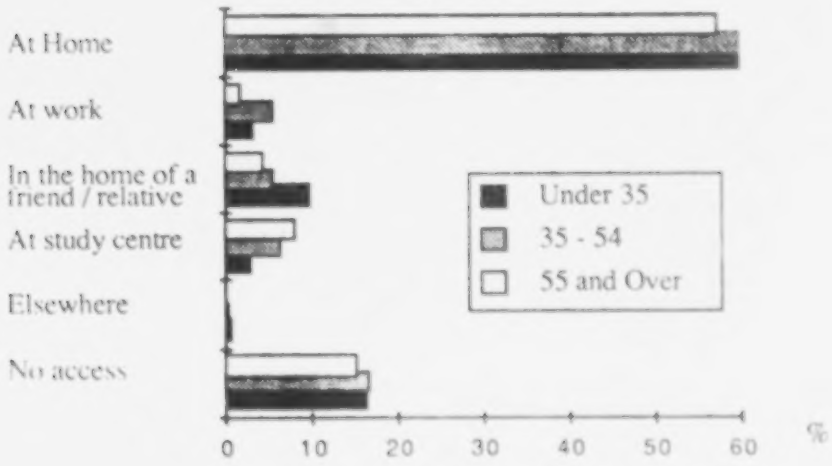
ii) Access by age

Older students (i.e. over 55 years of age) are slightly less likely than other age groups to have access to video equipment at home, at work or in the home of a friend or relative. They are more likely than other groups to use their O.U. study centre for video access. Younger students (i.e. under 35 years) are more likely to gain access in the home of a friend or relative.

Figure 4 shows these different patterns of access by age. More details are given in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Figure 4. Convenient access to a video-cassette machine - by age.

(Base: All survey respondents)



iii) Access by O.U. status

A slightly higher proportion of new students had access to video equipment at home than did continuing students (61.7% compared with 59.4%). New students were less likely than continuing students to report their O.U. study centre as being the most convenient location for video access (4.6% compared with 5.6%).

Table 1 in the Appendix provides further details.

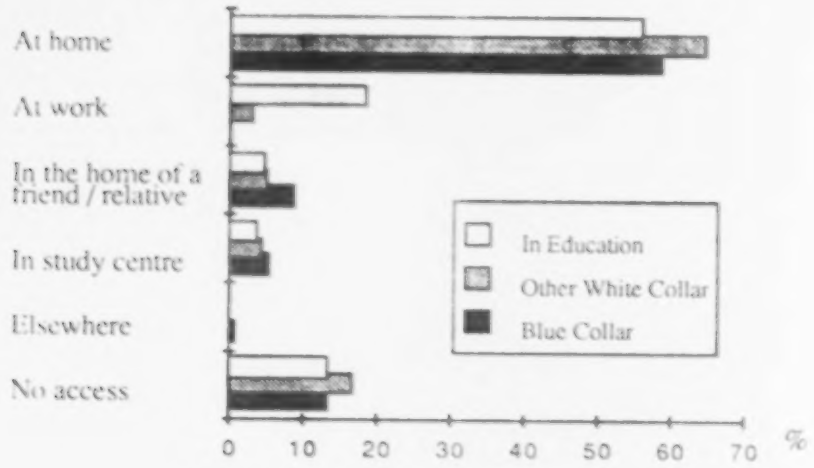
iv) Access by occupation

Students who work 'in education' are less likely to have access to video equipment at home than those in the other occupational categories. On the other hand, the proportion of students 'in education' with convenient access at work is dramatically higher than for other groups.

Figure 5 shows the pattern of access by occupational grouping. Further detail is provided in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Figure 5. Convenient access to a video-cassette machine - by occupation.

(Base: All survey respondents)

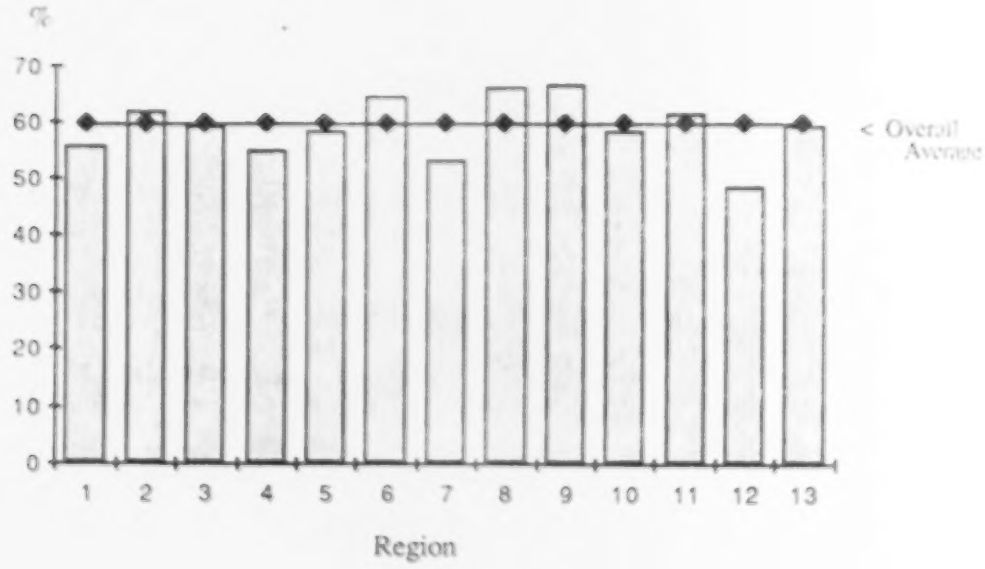


v) Access by region

There are some marked regional differences in access to video equipment, particularly in terms of study centre access.

Figure 6 shows regional variations in home access.

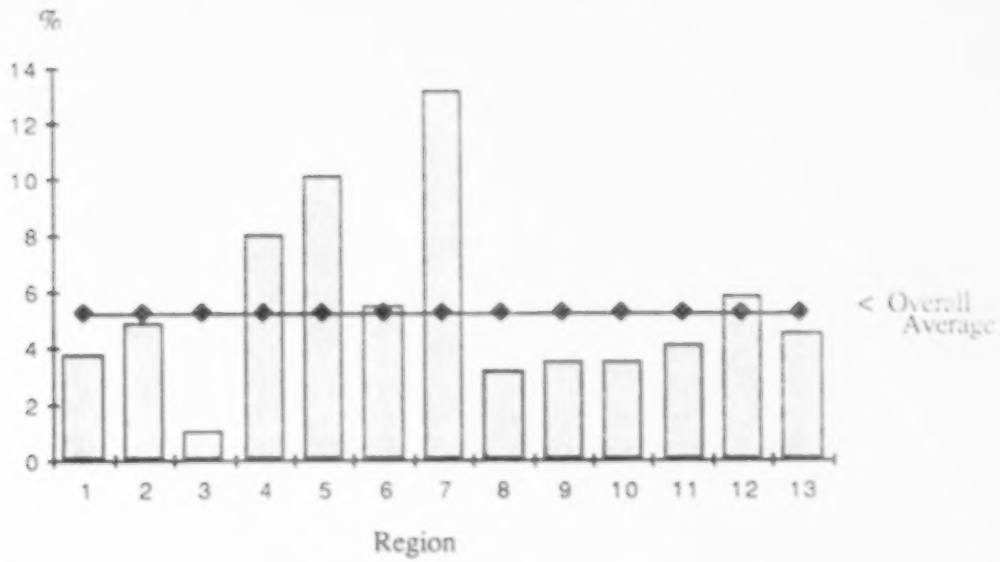
Figure 6. Home access to video - by region.



Home access is highest in Northern England, the North West and East Anglia (Regions 09, 08 and 06) and lowest in Northern Ireland, Yorkshire, the West Midlands and London (Regions 12, 07, 04 and 01).

Figure 7 illustrates regional variations in study centre access to video.

Figure 7. Study centre access to video - by region.



The proportion of students in Yorkshire (Region 07) and the East and West Midlands (Regions 05 and 04) indicating that their O.U. study centre provides the most convenient access to video equipment is considerably higher than in other regions. In contrast, students in the South West (Region 03) are least likely to find their study centre a convenient location for video access. Study centre access is also low in London, the North West, Northern England and Wales (Regions 01, 08, 09 and 10).

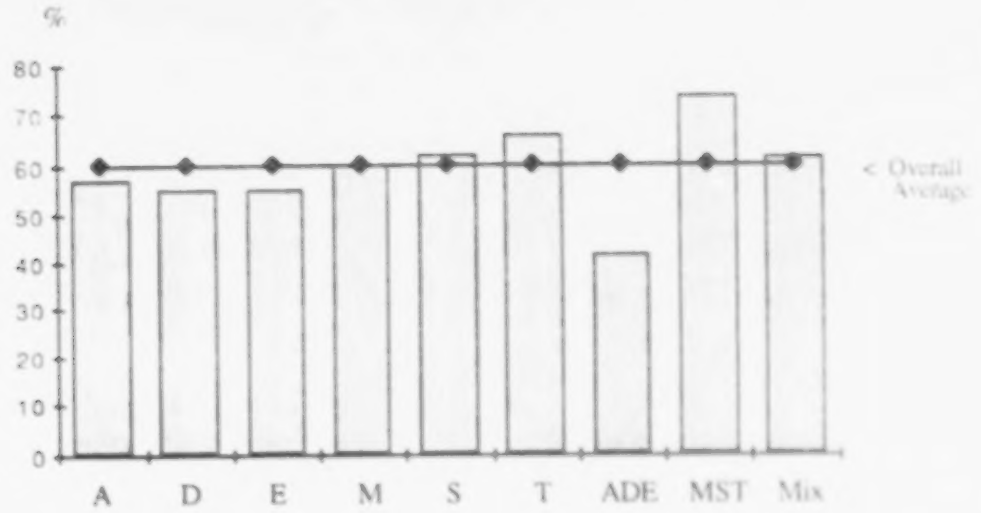
Comparing Figures 6 and 7, it appears that in those regions where students' access to video in the home is lowest, there is a tendency for study centre access to be correspondingly high. However, such compensation does not seem to occur in London and Northern Ireland (Regions 01 and 12), nor - to a lesser extent - in the South West and Wales (Regions 03 and 10).

Additional data on access by region is presented in Table 2 in the Appendix.

v) Access by course profile

Students were asked to indicate (by faculty or faculty grouping), the range of courses they had already studied or planned to study in the future. Figure 8 shows the variations in home access to video by course profile.

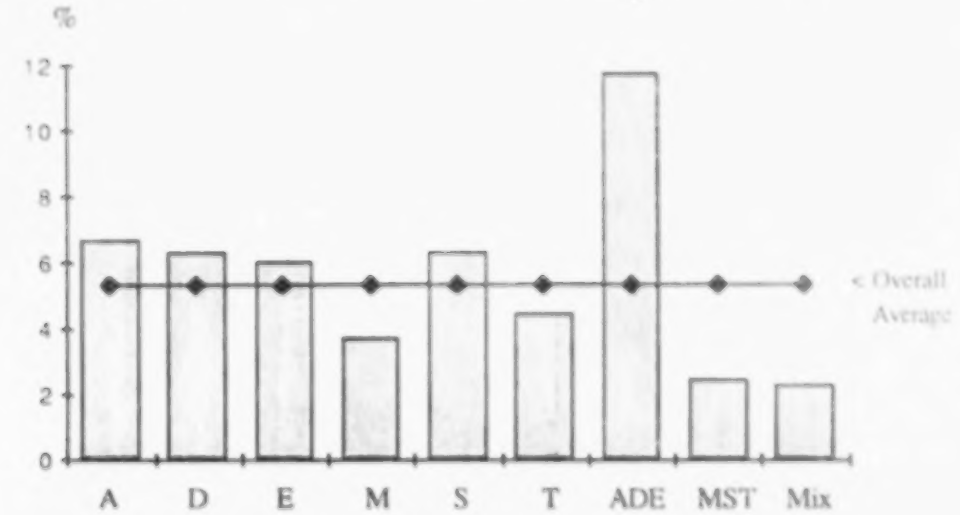
Figure 8. Home access to video - by course profile.



In general, students studying courses drawn mainly from the Arts and Social Science faculties and the School of Education were less likely to have home access to video than students studying courses from the Mathematics, Science and Technology faculties. [A survey of T101 students at summer school in 1986 revealed that 72% of the 540 respondents had access to a VCR machine in their home (Harding, 1986).] Those students studying a mix of ADE courses were least likely to have home access, while those taking courses in MST were most likely.

Figure 9 shows the pattern of study centre access by course profile, although extreme caution is needed in drawing any conclusions from this data due to the small numbers included in some of the categories.

Figure 9. Study centre access to video - by course profile.



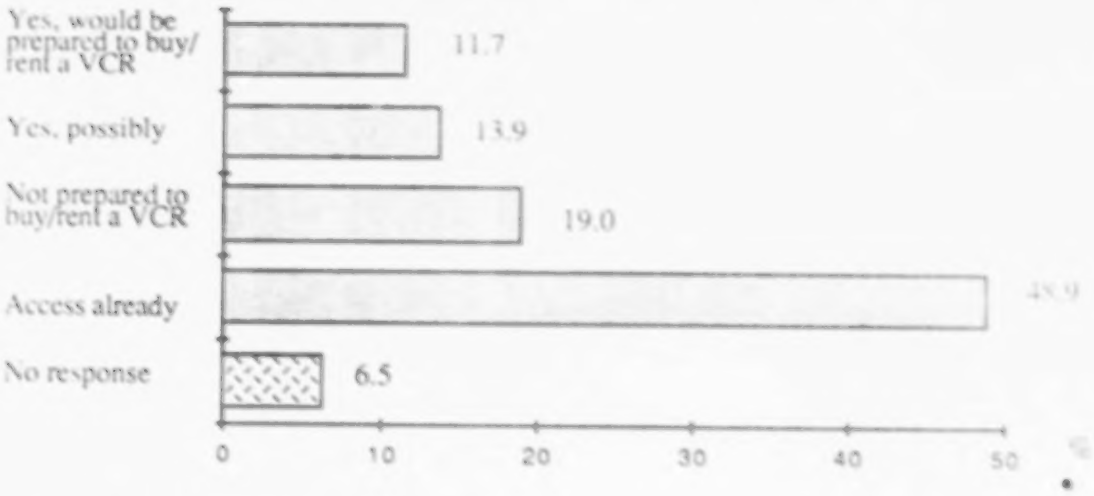
More details of video access by course profile are presented in Table 3 in the Appendix.

4.0 WILLINGNESS TO ACQUIRE A VCR FOR O.U. STUDY PURPOSES

Students were asked if they would be prepared to rent or purchase a video-cassette machine if the O.U. were to provide video material for course work. A quarter of those students currently without home access to video would consider acquiring a VCR for study purposes : less than one-fifth gave a negative response. However, almost half of those without a VCR in their home indicated that they already had access - presumably they considered that their arrangements for access were good enough and they did not need to acquire a machine of their own. The overall responses are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Willingness to acquire a VCR machine for O.U. study.

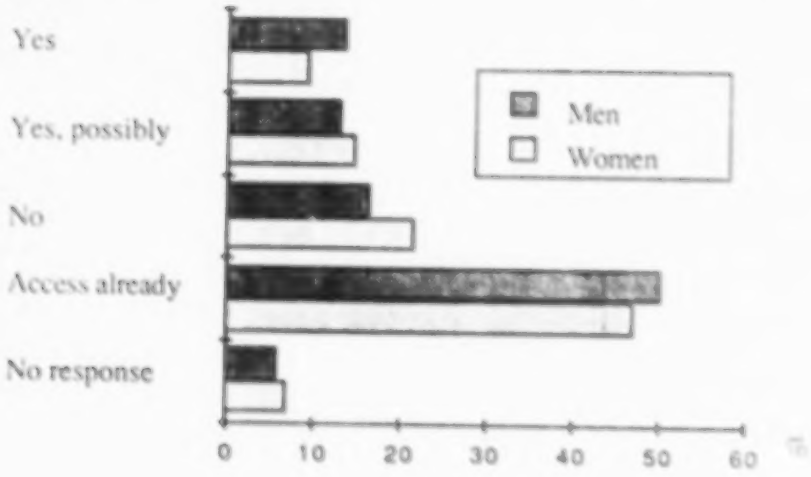
(Base: All respondents without VCR access at home)



Female students are slightly less willing than male students to acquire a VCR machine for their studies, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Willingness to acquire a VCR machine for O.U. study - by sex.

(Base: All respondents without VCR access at home)



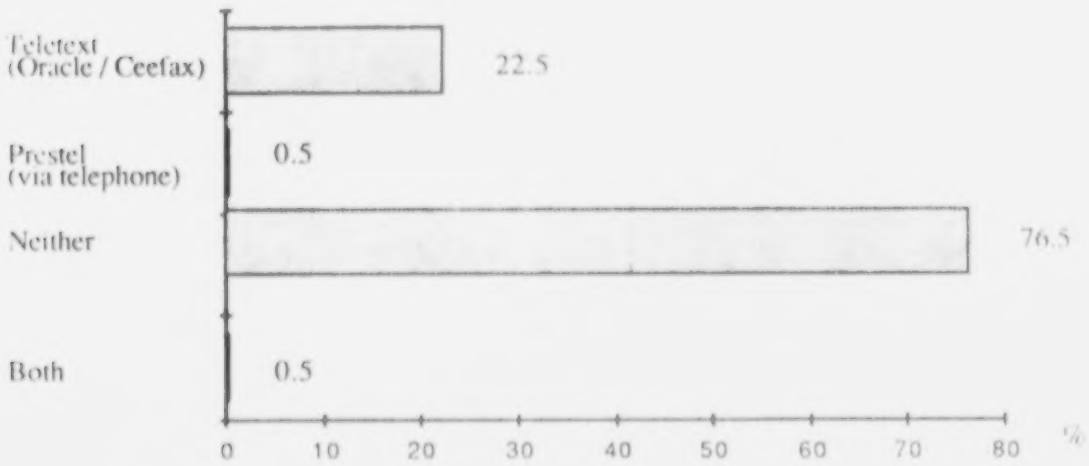
Further details of students' responses are presented in Table 4 in the Appendix.

5.0 ACCESS TO TELETEXT AND PRESTEL

Students were asked if their main television set at home gave them access to Teletext (i.e. Oracle and Ceefax) and/or Prestel (via their telephone). More than three-quarters of respondents had access to neither of these, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Access to Teletext and/or Prestel.

(Base: All respondents)



However, access to Teletext has increased since 1984. The last Audio-Visual Media Survey (Grundin, 1985) indicated that 15.8% of students had access to Teletext and 0.4% to Prestel at that time.

References

Durbridge, N. (1984)
Report to MST322 Course Team on Student Use and Opinion of Video Modules 1 and 2
IET Paper on Broadcasting No.248

Grundin, H. U. (1985)
Report on the 1984 Audio-Visual Media Survey
IET Paper

Harding, A. (1986)
Memo to T201 Course Team on Video Ownership/Access

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1986)
General Household Survey - Preliminary Results for 1985
London : OPCS

Table 1

Convenient access to a video-cassette machine for study purposes (%)

	All	Sex		Age			O.U. status		Occupation		
		Male	Female	Under 35	35-55	55 and over	New	Continuing	In education	Other white collar	Blue collar
At home	59.8	64.3	54.5	60.0	60.0	57.5	61.7	59.4	56.3	65.0	59.1
At work	4.3	4.4	4.2	3.4	5.6	1.8	2.5	4.8	18.7	3.2	.3
At home of friend/relative	7.1	5.0	9.5	10.0	5.7	4.4	7.3	7.0	4.8	5.2	8.9
At Study Centre	5.3	4.7	6.1	3.1	6.5	8.1	4.6	5.6	4.0	4.6	5.5
Elsewhere	.5	.5	.6	.7	.5	.0	.5	.6	.0	.3	1.0
No access	16.6	15.1	18.5	16.5	16.7	15.4	15.0	16.8	13.6	16.8	13.5
No response	6.4	6.0	6.7	6.3	5.0	12.9	8.5	5.8	2.5	5.0	11.6
% OF TOTAL	100	54.3	45.7	37.0	51.5	9.1	21.8	77.8	14.1	48.9	8.8

Table 2

Convenient access to a video-cassette machine for study purposes - by Region (%)

Region

	All	01 London	02 South	03 South West	04 West Midlands	05 East Midlands	06 East Anglia	07 Yorkshire
At home	59.8	55.7	62.0	59.5	55.0	58.5	64.3	53.0
At work	4.3	7.0	6.3	3.9	3.6	2.0	5.5	3.5
At home of friend/ relative	7.1	7.2	8.5	5.3	7.9	8.0	6.1	6.0
At Study Centre	5.3	3.8	4.9	1.0	8.0	10.1	5.5	13.2
Elsewhere	.5	.8	.0	1.7	.0	.0	1.1	.0
No access	16.6	17.3	15.0	20.6	18.7	17.8	10.0	19.4
% OF TOTAL		10.2	9.3	8.3	7.8	6.6	10.0	7.5

	08 North West	09 North	10 Wales	11 Scotland	12 Northern Ireland	13 South East
At home	66.3	66.8	58.6	61.3	48.4	59.1
At work	3.6	5.9	11.3	2.8	2.1	1.3
At home of friend/ relative	9.6	5.5	8.1	8.1	4.6	4.0
At Study Centre	3.2	3.5	3.5	4.1	5.9	4.6
Elsewhere	.9	.0	.8	.0	3.5	.0
No access	10.2	17.3	7.7	17.1	23.5	24.3
% OF TOTAL	10.3	4.5	3.3	10.0	2.3	8.8

Table 3

Convenient access to a video-cassette machine for study purposes - by Course Profile (%)

	ALL	Mainly A	Mainly D	Mainly E	Mainly M	Mainly S	Mainly T	ADE	MST	A general mix
At home	59.8	56.8	54.7	54.8	59.7	61.6	66.0	41.4	73.8	61.4
At work	4.3	2.4	3.2	6.3	4.4	6.0	4.1	11.9	3.6	6.8
At home of friend/relative	7.1	6.5	10.9	1.6	6.3	6.5	6.4	1.8	6.7	7.0
At Study Centre	5.3	6.7	6.3	6.0	3.7	6.3	4.4	11.7	2.4	2.3
Elsewhere	.5	.1	2.1	.0	.0	.2	.2	.0	1.0	.0
No access	16.6	18.6	16.8	25.8	19.6	14.7	15.2	22.4	9.1	15.0
No response	6.4	8.8	6.0	5.5	6.2	4.8	3.7	10.8	3.5	7.5
% OF TOTAL	100	22.0	16.3	3.1	10.2	12.4	14.1	2.8	8.3	9.5

Table 4

Willingness to acquire a VCR machine for O.U. study purposes (%)

	All	Sex	
		Male	Female
Yes, would be prepared to buy/rent a VCR	11.7	13.7	9.4
	25.6	26.9	24.1
Yes, possibly	13.9	13.2	14.7
Not prepared to buy/ rent a VCR	19.0	16.6	21.7
Access already	48.9	50.4	47.3
No response	6.5	6.0	7.0

(Base : all respondents without VCR access at home)

Relevant Questions from the Costs / Access Survey 1986

Do you have convenient access for O.U. study purposes to a video-cassette machine?
(If more than one alternative applies, mark the one most convenient for you to use.)

Yes, in my home	1	(72)
Yes, at my place of work	2	
Yes, in the home of friend/relative	3	
Yes, in an O.U. study centre	4	
Yes, in other location, namely	5	
No *(go to Q19)*	6	

Q18. What format of video-cassette does the machine (as in Q17) take?

VHS	1	(73)
Betamax	2	
Other format, namely	3	

Q19. Would you be prepared to rent/purchase a video-cassette machine, if the O.U. provided you with video material for your course work free of charge?

Yes	1	(74)
Yes, possibly	2	
No	3	
Already have access to video	4	

Q20. Does your (main) television set at home have:

Oracle/Ceefax?	1	(75)
Prestel (via telephone)?	2	
Neither of these?	3	

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